

JOHN

**George Washington Holley
a Man of Worth from Salisbury, CT**

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How a Woman Splits Wood

Fresh Flowers

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Welcome to JOHN

Fall is fast approaching. This whole year is moving along quite fast. We continue to send our prayers to all those who have been affected by Covid-19. Let us hope for an end to the virus soon so that life as we knew can at least be real again. Stay safe and enjoy this issue. JAH

I had planned on telling the George Holley story and his Niagara Falls life, but at first I thought it might not be of interest. How wrong I was, George lived in Niagara Falls for over thirty years and his book about the Falls is truly an enjoyable read.

Christine Holley is again off on another adventure. She helps us learn about the Colonial Dames of America by describing the sometimes very hard work that has to be done to find the reward of being accepted as a Colonial Dame.

My turn came with a childhood event that has never really left my memory. I have shared in the hope that we all can recall sometime in our life where we could have made a difference. The good news is that these opportunities still exist.

It is with interest that I look forward to the historical societies newsletters that come my way quite often. Mrs. Johnson's story of wood chopping was in one of the historical societies newsletters. With a little bit of humor, her situation speaks to just how hard life was back then.

This issue of JOHN is the 23rd issue over the past 3+ years. I have on occasion been asked to provide back issues. I do not have the space on my website to archive all the issues. I to use the Internet service, archive.org to upload all the issues to their site. Although you can search for the issues via the link. It would be better for you to contact me. That way I can give you direct links to a specific issue. This makes all the issues available to all. Thanks. JAH

George Washington Holley

A man of worth of Salisbury, CT

George was born February 28, 1810, in the Holley-Williams house in Lakeville, CT. He was the first of the children of John Milton and Sally (Porter) Holley born there.

George Washington Holley was the younger brother of Alexander Hamilton Holley, the Governor of CT.

After attending the nearby district school until he was 13, he entered the American Literary, Scientific and Military Academy, at Norwich, Vermont, from which he graduated in 1828. The next year he became a cadet in the U. S. Military Academy at West Point. In the third year of his course there, an illness arising from exposure on a practice march, resulted in deafness, which disqualified him for military service and he was obliged to leave the Academy before graduating.

In August 23, 1833, he married Caroline E. daughter of Judge Samuel and Cynthia (Newell) Church, of Salisbury, and began married life in the vicinity of Lime Rock, going into the iron business with Alexander & Francis Holley & John W. Caulkins.

In 1883, George became attracted to an agricultural venture in the "New West" so he made a considerable purchase of land in Peru, La Salle County, Illinois, which showed great promise situated on the west bank of the Illinois River.

There he settled, as farmer and dairyman, and he was soon induced to become editor of the local newspaper and conducted it during the "log cabin and hard cider" campaign of 1840, which brought William Henry Harrison into the Presidency.

Late in that year Mr. Holley came back East, on a visit, and while staying with his maternal uncle, Gen. Peter B. Porter of Niagara Falls, he was persuaded by him to sell out in Illinois and come live on the General's large estate and assume care of it.

General Potter died in 1844, but Mr. Holley, as his executor, continued his intimate connection with the Porter family until 1855. In that year he built a handsome stone house, on the shore of the Niagara River, near the American Rapids, and made it his home for approximately thirty years.

Though handicapped by his deafness, he always had considerable reputation as a public speaker. Indeed, his July 4th *Oration* at Peru Illinois, in 1839 and his *Address* before the Union Agricultural Society at Joliet, Illinois in 1840 are both early and rare.

His book, ***Niagara; its History and Geology, Etc.***, was published in New York, Buffalo and Toronto, in 1872, this went through several editions. This was followed by ***The Falls of Niagara and Other Famous Cataracts***, published in 1882.

In 1883, Mr. and Mrs. Holley celebrated their Golden Wedding, and as a souvenir of the event, Mr. Holley published a pamphlet of reminiscences, entitled *Fifty Years Married*. Mrs. Holley died on May 30, 1884 and shortly afterward, Mr. Holley moved down to Ithaca and spent the remainder of his life in the home of his only surviving child, Elizabeth P. (Holley) Church, wife of the Irving Porter Church, who was for forty years a member of the faculty of Cornell University. The Holley's other children, two sons and a daughter, died either in infancy or childhood.



His personal appearance was unforgettable. Though most particular was his dress, such as the use of elastic webbing in the mid-leg of his trousers, to prevent bagging at the knees. Shoes made on a queer shaped last of his own invention, which he thought afforded greater comfort to his feet. Another striking and inseparable adjunct was a sort of fan-shaped

piece of thin japanned metal, equipped with a handle, and suspended from his neck. By holding the upper edge of this device between his teeth and inclining the convex surface of it toward anyone talking with him, he was enabled to carry on ordinary conversations.

A genial, companionable man, full of anecdote and reminiscence and theory, he lived in possession of his faculties, to his 88th year, and died at Ithaca, June, 12, 1897.



Niagara its History and Geology

by George Washington Holley

The best place to start with this story is to recall the author's own words, penned at Niagara Falls, NY in May 1st, 1872.

He writes: Although every place which has been the home of human beings has a history more or less interesting and more or less known, yet it may be doubted whether any place on the globe so famous as Niagara is so little known in reference to what may be called its *individual* history. To supply that deficiency is the object of this work.

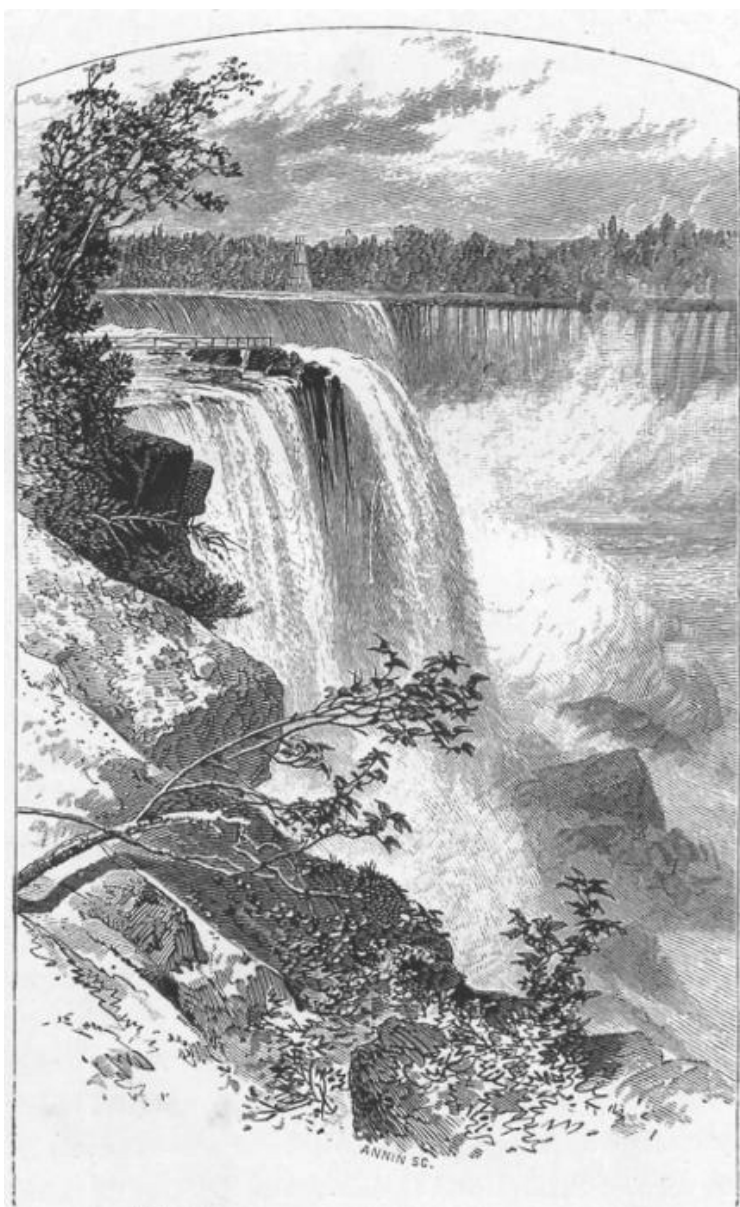
This writer, having resided in the village of Niagara Falls nearly a third of a century, has had the opportunity to become thoroughly acquainted with the locality, and to study it with constantly increasing interest and admiration. It is like old wine and old friends. It never palls or wearies; never provokes or disappoints. Like a beautiful and true, an excellent and admirable mistress, the faithful lover may return to it with ever new delight, ever growing affection. It will humor and minister to all his better thoughts and aspirations, reprove



and repress all his baser appetites and passions. It is a humanizer in many ways. It is so great, so glorious, that, while looking at it, the small things of men and the world are revulsed and forgotten, and the soul, like its spray released from its ponderable, mounts heavenward.

Long observation enables the writer to offer some new suggestions in regard to the Geological age of the Falls, their retrocession, and the causes which have been potent in producing it; and also to demonstrate the existence of a barrier or dam that was once the shore of an immense fresh water sea, which reached from Niagara to Lake Michigan, and emptied its waters in the Gulf of Mexico.

As it is hoped that the work may be useful to future visitors to the Falls, and also possess some interest for those who have seen them before, it seemed desirable to avoid the introduction of notes and the citation of authorities. For this reason several paragraphs are placed in the text which would otherwise have been introduced in notes. This is especially true in the chapter of local history, which will interest the local more than the general reader. GWH



THE
FALLS OF NIAGARA
AND
OTHER FAMOUS CATARACTS.
BY
GEORGE W. HOLLEY.

With Thirty Illustrations.

London:
HODDER AND STOUGHTON,
27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

Excerpts from the book follow, just a few examples of this most entertaining story of the Falls.

A complete copy of this work is in the public domain and is available for reading online or downloading via a search on the internet. JAH

The oldest and most notable name in all this territory is Niagara, as would naturally be inferred, when we consider the varied and wonderful features of the mighty river which flows across this country. Taking leave of Lake Erie, its clear waters gradually spread themselves out in a broad, bright channel, over a plain, open country, having a slight declivity, just sufficient to make a gentle current, thereby adding the living beauty and force of motion to the broad expanse of a lake-like surface, that surface itself diversified and relieved by the pleasant islands, large and small, which are scattered over it. Eddying into every quiet bay, coquetting with every salient angle, moving to the melody of its own murmurs, it flows on serenely and musically.

The rapids above the Falls



Across the river from Lewiston is Queenston, so named in honor of Queen Charlotte. The battle which bears its name was fought on the 13th of October, 1813, between the American and British armies. The former crossed the river, made the attack, and carried the heights. The commander of the British forces, General Brock, and one of his aids, Colonel McDonald, were killed. The British were reënforced, and the American militia refusing to cross over to aid the Americans, the latter were obliged to return across the river, leaving a number of prisoners in the hands of the enemy. Some years afterward, the Colonial Parliament caused a fine monument to be erected on the heights to the memory of General Brock. It presents a conspicuous and imposing appearance from the terrace below.

Mouth of the Chasm and Brock's Monument



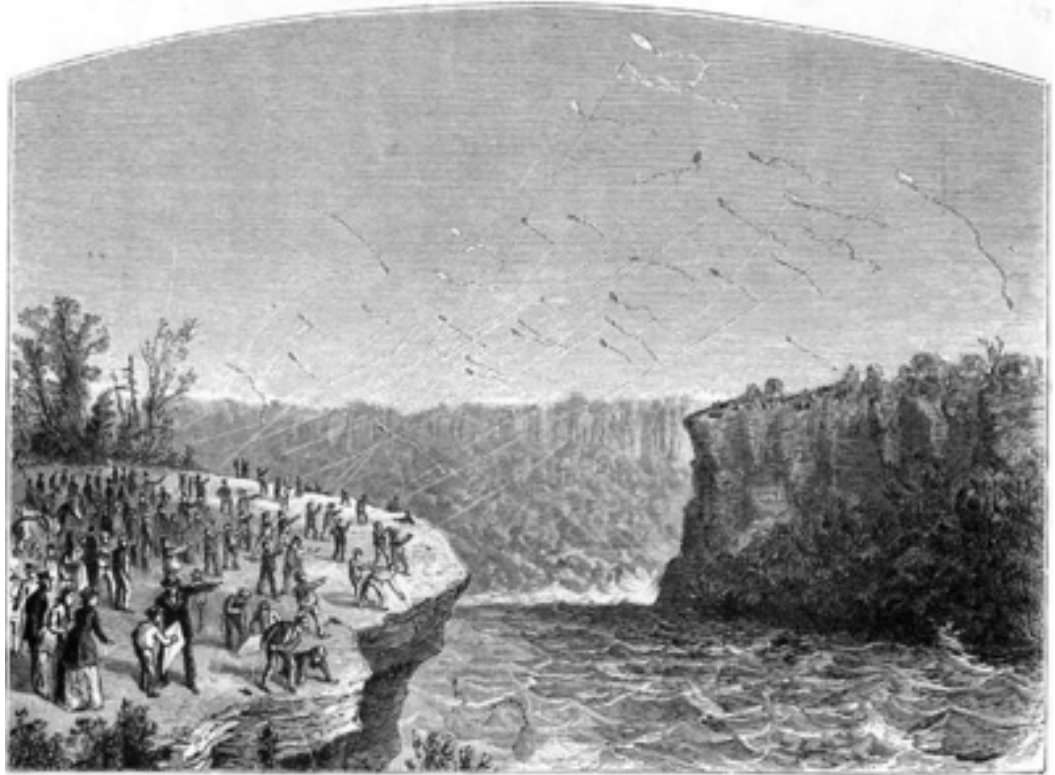
The history of the navigation of the Rapids of Niagara may be appropriately concluded in this chapter, which is devoted to a notice of the remarkable man who began it, who had no rival and has left no successor in it—Joel R. Robinson. In the summer of 1838, while some extensive repairs were being made on the main bridge to Goat Island, a mechanic named Chapin fell from the lower side of it into the rapids, about ten rods from the Bath Island shore. The swift current bore him toward the first small island lying below the bridge. Knowing how to swim, he made a desperate and successful effort to reach it. It is hardly more than thirty feet square, and is covered with cedars and hemlocks. Saved from drowning, he seemed likely to fall a victim to starvation. All thoughts were then turned to Robinson, and not in vain. He launched his light red skiff from the foot of Bath Island, picked his way cautiously and skillfully through the rapids to the little island, took Chapin in and brought him safely to the shore, much to the relief of the spectators, who gave expression to their appreciation of Robinson's service by a moderate contribution.

**Joel R.
Robinson**



How the Suspension Bridge was Begun

Mr. Charles Ellet, in 1840, built the first suspension bridge over the chasm. He offered a reward of five dollars to any one who would get a string across it. The next windy day all the boys in the neighborhood were kiting, and before night a youth landed his kite in Canada and received the reward. The first iron successor of the string was a small wire cable, seven-eighths of an inch in diameter. To this was suspended a wire basket in which two persons could cross the chasm. The basket was attached to an endless rope, worked by a windlass on each bank. At an entertainment



given on the occasion of the completion of the bridge, the good people of the embryo village at the bridge, elated with their new acquisition, were inclined to regard their neighbors at the Falls with patronizing sympathy. One of the latter said to Mr. Ellet, "This bridge is a very clever affair, and you only need the Falls here to build up a respectable village." "Well," he replied, "give me money enough and I will put them here." He had great faith in dollar-power.

This bridge was an excellent auxiliary in the construction of the present Railway Suspension Bridge, built by Mr. John A. Roebling. It was begun in 1852, and the first locomotive crossed it in March, 1855. It is one of the most brilliant examples of modern engineering, and stands unrivaled for its grace, beauty, and strength. Seizing at once upon the natural advantages of the location, the engineer resolved to combine the tubular system with that of the suspension bridge. The carriage way was placed level with the banks of the river at the edges of the chasm. The railway track was placed eighteen feet above, on a level with the top of the secondary banks across which the two railroads were to approach it. The plan was perfect, and perfectly and faithfully executed in all its details. As the traveler passes over it in a carriage or a railway car, from the almost total absence of any vibratory motion he feels at once that he is on a safe basis, and his sense of security is complete.

The Historical Significance of the Holley-Rankine House

By Francis R. Kowsky

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Holley-Rankine House served as the residence



of men prominent in the economic, political, and social life of Niagara Falls, a city which owed its early development to the abundant power available from the Niagara River. Numerous mills, which had been established along the river in the early 19th century, were by mid-century consolidated into several companies. One of the largest of these was owned by Porter Brothers, a firm created in the 1840s by A. Augustus Porter and Peter Porter, together with **George Washington Holley** (1810-1897) who was a

distant relative of the Porters.

Holley, whose family was involved with politics, was elected to a term in the New York State Assembly in 1853. He was later appointed to serve as U.S. Consul in Naples before becoming Deputy Collector of Customs at Niagara Falls in 1865.

In 1855, during his tenure in the state assembly, Holley purchased from Peter Porter a wooded tract of land overlooking the Niagara River, just above the American Falls. On this land he built his substantial villa, which was mentioned in Holley's will of 1879, and created elaborately landscaped grounds which included carriage drives and an artificial pond. (The landscaping has since been destroyed by the construction of the Robert Moses Parkway.) From this agreeable residence beside the rapids, Holley, who became enamored of local history, surveyed the falls and the surrounding landscape which he described in his book *Niagara* as "like a beautiful and true, an excellent mistress, (for) the faithful lover may return to it with ever new delight, ever growing affection. (**George Washington Holley, *Niagara, Its History and Geology, Incidents and Poetry*. Toronto: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1872.**)

After Holley's death in 1897, the house was unoccupied until 1902 when it was purchased by **William B. Rankine** (1858-1905). Rankine, who was trained as a lawyer, took a more pragmatic view of Niagara than did Holley. Early in his career he became interested in the possibility of harnessing the falls for the generation of electric power. This interest was stirred in him while he was reading law in the office of A. A. Porter in Niagara Falls. After being accepted to the bar in 1880, Rankine moved to New York City where he established himself as a successful attorney. In 1890, however, he gave up his practice to devote himself entirely to his dream of utilizing the falls to produce electricity. Drawing upon his New York connections, he became largely responsible for the establishment of the Niagara Falls Power Company which built the famous Adams Power Plant Complex in 1895-1900.

Rankine returned to Niagara Falls in 1899 and he continued to develop his association with the growing hydroelectric industry.

In recognition of his service to the city and the state, a bronze bust of Rankine stands on the grounds of the Niagara Falls city hall, dedicated to his memory as "Father of Niagara Power."

the colonial dames of america



**America's First
Colonial Dames**

'LET US FOUND A PATRIOTIC SOCIETY OF WOMEN DESCENDED FROM COLONIAL ANCESTRY'

With these words, spoken in April 1890, Maria Denning "May" Van Rensselaer (Mrs. John King Van Rensselaer) of New York initiated what was to become the oldest colonial lineage society for women in the United States. Welcome to The Colonial Dames of America. Celebrating its 130th anniversary in 2020, the Society was established to commemorate the history of the thirteen American colonies and the men and women who founded them. Our mission is to promote the historic preservation of sites and objects, award scholarships, educate the public about American history, inspire patriotism, and promote fellowship among our members.



National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century

The National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century unites over 11,000 members in a communion based on their interest in American history, their love and respect for this nation and a mutual desire to work together in harmonious fellowship to achieve the goals of the Society. It is one of the few societies of today which has heraldry at the core of its objectives and additionally holds one of the largest collections of Coats of Arms in the country. Moreover, compared to other lineage societies, the National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century requires that potential applicants must be able to prove their ancestry in the country prior to 1701.





Our objectives:

1. To aid in the preservation of records and historical sites of our country.
The society collects and records and nowadays digitizes the early records of our country's development.
2. To foster interest in historical colonial research.
The members visit libraries and cemeteries across the country to research and copy the records therein.
3. To support the youth of our country in education.
There are many different scholarships that the Society awards annually.
4. To commemorate the noble and heroic deeds of our ancestors who were the founders of this great Republic.
5. To zealously maintain the high principles of virtue, courage and patriotism which led to the independence of the Colonies and laid the foundation for the establishment of the United States of America
6. To maintain a Library of Heraldry and preserve the lineage and Coats of Arms of our Armorial Ancestors.

The Society continuously adds to its extensive coats of arms collection, maintaining the original lineage provided by members during the application process.

7. To develop a library specializing in the seventeenth century American colonial data.

The Society built and maintains a library specializing in the 17th century American colonial data at their headquarters building in D.C., which is open to the public.



Thomas Lamb(e), Ancestor by Christine A. Holley

The National Society, Colonial Dames of the XVII Century, hum, I wonder if I could qualify for that lineage society? Well, the answer to that question turned out to be a definite "Yes", *oh* and also a huge task! Verifying 12 lines of lineage is quite a project, however I had an advantage that I had already verified six different ancestors of mine for DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution), but that work wouldn't transfer over, since each society has different requirements for verification. At least I was used to the process and some of the terminology.

Once I got started, I was able to find documents that validated my lineage all the way up to my 9X's great grandfather, Thomas Lamb. He had already been proven as an Ancestor in this organization, so that part was already completed. Thomas arrived in 1630 from England and settled in Roxbury, MA. He requested, "Freeman" status (a qualifying event for membership in the CDXVII) on 19 Oct 1630 and was admitted on 18 May 1631, my source of proof was, **"The Great Migration Begins"** VII, pg 1153-1155

My line from Thomas Lamb's connects to the wife of Ephraim Hodges - Katherine Johnson. Ephraim Hodges is one of my DAR supplemental patriots & we have had the opportunity to visit his (and Katherine's) gravesite in Lisle, Broome Co. NY.

Strangely, on a visit to Shrewsbury, MA to visit my sister Barbara, (also a member of CDXVIIC) we also found the gravesite of Zebadiah Johnson, the grandfather of Katherine Johnson Hodges. Zebadiah Johnson's mother was Dorothy Lamb and now we're on our way to connecting to Thomas Lamb. Per the many rules for acceptance, proofs must be listed for each person in each generation and proofs for birth must show the connection to the succeeding generation.

My completed application included over 157 pages of proofs and verification for all these 12 generations. The genealogists in Washington approved my application with just some minor corrections and additions on 2 July 2020. I am now a member of the El Camino Chapter in the state of New Mexico.

Thomas Lamb, Birth - 1596 Stowe, Langdt, Suffolk, England
Death - 28 Mar 1646 Roxbry, Suffolk County, MA

Burial

Eliot Burying Ground
Roxbury, Suffolk County,
Massachusetts, USA

Thomas Lamb was a merchant who came to New England in 1630 in the Winthrop Fleet with his wife, Elizabeth and two sons. He settled at Roxbury where he acquired a homestead property of 18 acres, which lay between the Roxbury Church (of Apostle John Eliot) and Stony Brook. He filed to become a Freeman (men who belonged to the church and have the right to vote, term used in the colonys, these freeman set up the early government) on 19 Oct 1630. Lamb, took his oath as a freeman on 18 May 31.

He was one of the founders of the first church at Roxbury, July 1632. and in 1633, he opened the first quarry in New England on the island of Squantom in Boston Harbor. He also helped to establish the first free school in America, he was one of six individuals who pledged themselves for the support the Free School in Roxbury, later known as Roxbury Latin School and the English and Latin High School.



THE OATH OF A FREE-MAN.

I (*A.B.*) being by Gods providence, an Inhabitant, and Freeman, within the Jurisdiction of this Commonwealth; do freely acknowledge my self to be subject to the Government thereof: And therefore do here swear by the great and dreadful Name of the Ever-living God, that *I* will be true and faithfull to the same, and will accordingly yield assistance & support thereunto, with my person and estate, as in equity *I* am bound; and will also truly endeavour to maintain and preserve all the liberties and priviledges thereof, submitting my self to the wholesome Lawes & Orders made and established by the same. And further, that *I* will not plot or practice any evill against it, or consent to any that shall so do; but will timely discover and reveal the same to lawfull Authority now here established, for the speedy preventing thereof.

Moreover, *I* doe solemnly bind my self in the sight of God, that when *I* shall be called to give my voyce touching any such matter of this State, in which Freemen are to deal, *I* will give my vote and suffrage as *I* shall judge in mine own conscience may best conduce and tend to the publike weal of the body, without respect of persons, or favour of any man. So help me God in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jamestown Memorial Gates – Jamestown, Virginia



MEMORIAL GATES

On May 9, 1907, at Jamestown, Va., these Memorial Gates were dedicated. They were erected by "The Colonial Dames of America," in commemoration of the "Birth of the Nation" in 1607, and are shown as the frontispiece of this volume.

They mark the entrance to an old Church Yard, surrounding what was the oldest American Church. For centuries, nothing remained but the ruins of a stone tower, recently converted into a beautiful Chapel, by a kindred society.

With the passing of John Lewis, the remembrance of his impact on the peaceful movement for freedom & equal rights for all; must not be forgotten.

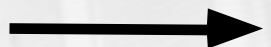
His life long efforts, hopefully will cause us all to stop & reflect just a little on your own personal exposure to the terrible injustice our country still faces.

If Only I Had Taken Your Hand

by John A Holley

It was the early 50s, my cousin; Jack Holley had recently returned from his 90 day Army training at Ft. Leonard Wood, MO. While settling back to his old routine, he did maintain contact with some of his fellow soldiers. One lived in Texas. Jack put together a short trip down to see him. He invited his Grandmother, Harriet and I to go with him. We drove down from Denver and checked into a nice hotel. We met up with Jack's Army buddy and had a nice dinner downtown and a walk around as he showed us the town. Much to this young Northern boy's surprise, I saw many drinking fountains that were marked "Colored Only".

This continued to bother me as we walked back to the hotel. It just didn't seem right that a simple act of drinking from a fountain would raise up any hate in anybody.



Back in the room, I sat at the small desk & took a piece of hotel letterhead and drew a picture of a person bending down to drink from a fountain with the "Colored Only" sign directly above. I noted on the bottom of the drawing that "Texas should be ashamed of this".

As I look back on this incident and reflect on all the opportunities we all have to make the world a better place just by being a little more human to each other, I must tell you what I did with my protest. I put it in an envelope and put it back in the desk drawer. And you know who probably found it, not the hotel owner, but the maid.

Many people think that the race problem will never be solved. It hasn't improved much in my lifetime. I still recall times when prejudice jumped up. How many times could we have made a difference?

From this early experience of hate, I still seek an answer. A young white boy was heartfelt about just how serious inequality is to all. The only solution I can even imagine in today's world, would be for every person to put out a hand.

Extend your hand to the protesters in the street, extend your hand to the police armed and ready to protect, extend your hand to all those, who if they take it, will begin to heal this terrible sore of inequality.

I went on to a comfortable life and career. In doing so I sadly admit that I was a witness to many inequalities, but did nothing. Today I wonder what my life would have been, if I had went back to one of those hateful drinking fountains & offered my hand to help the next person who was forced to drink. Who knows, by working together we could have made a difference. JAH

How a Woman Splits Wood

first appeared in the Jefferson County Journal -- 01Jan1879

Johnson was notified by his better-half the other day that the wood-pile had been



reduced to one chunk, but he caught the panic downtown and failed to send us a replenishing load. Just before noon Mrs. Johnson hunted up the ax and went for the lone chunk. She knew that a woman could split wood as well as a man, she had read and heard about woman's awkwardness, but she knew it was all nonsense.

She spit on hands and raised the ax over he left shoulder, right hand lowest down on the handle. She made a terrible blow, and the ax went into the ground, and she fell over the chunk. She got up, looked all around to see if anybody was watching, rubbed her elbows, and then took up the ax the other way. She meant to strike the stroke plump center, but she forgot the clothesline above her head, and the ax caught it, jerked up and down and Mrs. Johnson went over the ash heap. She rose up with less confidence in her eye, and the boys in the alley heard some say "Darn it to Texas!" but of course it wasn't Mrs. Johnson. She might have moved the stick a little, but she didn't. She went and took the clothesline down, then she coiled it up and hung it in the shed, then came back and surveyed the chunk, turned it over and walked around it. The clothesline was to blame, and now there was nothing to interfere. She got the ax, raised it once or twice, and then gave an awful blow. It chipped off a sliver and was buried in the ground, and the knob on handle knocked the breath out of her. She gasped, coughed and jumped up and down, and the boys heard someone say, "If I had that man here I'd mop the ground with him, I would."

After a while she grew calmer, and picked up the ax to see if she had injured it. She hadn't and she smoothed down the handle, spit on the edge, and finally went to get a rind and grease it, suddenly remembering that an ax wasn't worth a cent without greasing. By and by she was ready. She sat the chunk on end, put a stone behind it, and then surveyed it from all sides. She had it now just where she wanted it. She looked around to see if any of the neighbors were looking, and then she raised to ax. She would hit the stick just in the center and lay it open at one blow. She put out 1 foot, drew a long breath, and then brought the ax sown with a 'Ha!' just as she had seen John do. The ax went off, the hand struck the stick, and so did Mrs. Johnson. She saw 40,000 stars to the square foot, her nose was 'barked' and several teeth were loosened. When she rose up she determined to butcher Johnson the moment he appeared. Then she concluded she would not kill him at once, but torture him to death and be 2 days about it. After getting into the house and putting a sticking plaster on her knee and some lard on her elbow, she concluded to only wound Johnson on the shoulder with a butcher knife.

After pinning up the tear in her dress, and getting a piece of white court plaster for the nose, she went and borrowed some wood and concluded to let Johnson off entirely, and tell him she hurt her nose falling down the cellar.

FRESH FLOWERS



Every American ought to have the right to be treated as he would wish to be treated, as one would wish his children to be treated.

No one has been barred on account of his race from fighting or dying for America, there are no "white" or "colored" signs on the foxholes or graveyards of battle.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy
1917 – 1963